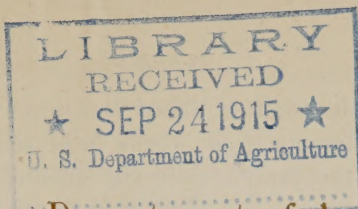


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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

New and Rare Seed Distribution,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FETERITA (*Andropogon sorghum*).

OBJECT OF THE DISTRIBUTION.—The distribution of new and rare seeds has for its object the dissemination of new and rare crops, improved strains of staple crops, and high-grade seed of crops new to sections where the data of the department indicate such crop to be of considerable promise. Each package contains a sufficient quantity for a preliminary trial, and where it is at all practicable the recipient is urged to use the seed for the production of stocks for future plantings. It is believed that if this practice is followed consistently it will result in a material improvement in the crops of the country. Please make a full report on the inclosed blank regarding the results you obtain with the seed.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION.

This sorghum was first brought to the United States from Alexandria, Egypt, in November, 1906, and was later secured from the Sudan, where it is commonly grown under the name *feterita*. As it is a member of the group of sorghums called *durra*, the name "Sudan *durra*" has also been applied to it.

Feterita is an early-maturing sorghum of considerable promise both for grain and forage. It has rather slender stems 5 to 7 feet high, which are semijuicy and slightly sweet before ripening and only fairly leafy. The stems are of irregular height, owing to its stooling and branching habit, which also results in some unevenness in maturity.

It resembles *milo* in habit, except that the heads are uniformly erect and the seeds are larger and softer as well as bluish white in color. The seed tends to shatter if it is allowed to stand in the field until overripe.

It is a week earlier than Dwarf *milo* and about three weeks earlier than Blackhull *kafir*. In drought resistance it compares favorably with any sorghum yet introduced. Yields of 20 to 50 bushels per acre may be expected under ordinary conditions in the *kafir* and *milo* region.

PLANTING.

Feterita should be planted about the same time as the other sorghums, perhaps three or four weeks later than Indian corn. It is not well to plant too early, while the ground is cold, since feterita is naturally a warm-weather plant and owing to the softness of the seed there is apt to be considerable loss through decay before germination. Difficulty in obtaining a stand has been experienced in some localities, the poor stand probably being due to planting in cold ground. In regions affected by the sorghum midge, very early plantings are recommended. Feterita may be planted either in a furrow with a lister or surface planted with an ordinary corn planter; the lister method is advised in arid sections. It should be planted in rows the same distance apart as Indian corn, about 36 to 44 inches. When thus planted, 5 to 7 pounds of seed per acre will be required.

CULTIVATION.

Feterita should be cultivated much the same as Indian corn. It may be given two or three harrowings while the plants are small, and as soon as sufficient growth is made the crop should be given a fairly deep and thorough cultivation. Two or three subsequent and shallower cultivations are desirable. Late cultivations must be shallow to avoid breaking the surface roots.

HARVESTING.

For combined utilization as forage and grain, the crop should be cut in the late dough stage. When planted in rows the crop can best be handled with a corn harvester and put in shocks of 20 to 30 bundles each. If these shocks are allowed to stand for some time before being headed, it will allow more complete maturity of the heads arising from the stools. Where the crop is intended solely for grain, it should be allowed to stand until the earliest heads are fully mature; but it must not be left until all the heads are fully ripe, else considerable seed may be lost through shattering. Where the heads are cut off in the field, it is best to pasture the remainder of the crop. Should the crop go down on account of a storm before it is harvested, it can be utilized by pasturing with hogs or cattle.

FEEDING.

The forage value of feterita is about equal to that of a milo. For strictly forage purposes it is perhaps excelled by both the kafirs and the sweet sorghums. The heavy production of grain, however, makes it effective when fed in the bundle, heads and all, to work horses or stock cattle. For fattening cattle or sheep it can also be fed in this manner with good results, but hogs should always be kept in the feed

lot to pick up the undigested and scattered grain. It is not as valuable for dairy cows as for the above classes of stock. For use as silage it will be found equal to any of the sorghums. As a grain it will probably rank along with the kafirs and milos, 10 bushels of it being considered equal to 9 bushels of shelled Indian corn. The addition of a small amount of cottonseed meal or other concentrate high in fat will greatly increase its effectiveness as a flesh producer.

SEED SELECTION.

In growing this crop every farmer should make a practice of selecting seed for his own planting. This is extremely important with *feterita* because it is a new crop, quite variable as yet, and also because, on account of its open glumes, natural crossing takes place oftener than in other sorghums. Seed selections should be made at a distance of 100 yards or more from other varieties. These selections are best made as soon as the first heads mature. Only leafy, erect plants that have no side branches and little tendency to stool should be chosen. The heads should be one well free from the boot, large and well filled from butt to tip. Such plants, if seeded thickly enough, will produce as much seed as the stooling type and will be much easier to harvest on account of the more uniform maturity of the seed heads. The field should be rogued consistently each season to remove other types of sorghum if the grain is intended for home planting or for sale as seed.

SUGGESTIONS.

Feterita should be compared carefully with the ordinary sorghum crops of your locality, especially with Dwarf milo and Blackhull kafir. Exaggerated claims for *feterita* are being made by certain growers who are taking advantage of the lack of knowledge regarding this crop to secure enormous profits through the sale of seed. Extraordinary yields are not to be expected, but under normal conditions *feterita* should at least equal Blackhull kafir and Dwarf milo. Farmers are advised to try *feterita* in comparison with milo or kafir before planting it extensively. It would be well to try different rates of seeding in each locality. Stands having plants 4, 8, 12, and 18 inches apart in the row should be tested. Seeding at different dates should also be tried. Reports on the success of the crop as a stock feed and also on its comparative drought resistance are desired.

JULY 22, 1915.

